Ministry of
Skills Development and Labour

SERVICE PLAN
2002/2003 – 2004/2005

**Ministry of
Skills Development
and Labour**

February 2002

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A *New Era* of Government Service

Three-year Service Plans represent an important part of the government's commitment to open and accountable government. In August 2001, the government amended the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act* to require government to table a three-year Strategic Plan and annual three-year service plans for ministries and government organizations with the provincial budget. These Plans will ensure government and its individual ministries clearly outline their goals, and enable British Columbians to hold government accountable for its decisions and actions.

The government's Three Year Strategic Plan articulates the government's vision: *British Columbia is a prosperous and just province, whose citizens achieve their potential and have confidence in the future.* It also establishes three strategic goals that are key to achieving the government's overall vision:

- A strong and vibrant provincial economy
- A supportive social infrastructure
- Safe, healthy communities and a sustainable environment

This Service Plan details the Ministry's mission and objectives, which support the government's strategic goals. The Service Plan also includes performance measures that will be used to assess the Ministry's progress in achieving its objectives. Ministry objectives and performance measures are a new initiative. In some cases, as planning progresses, performance measures will become more detailed as they are further developed.

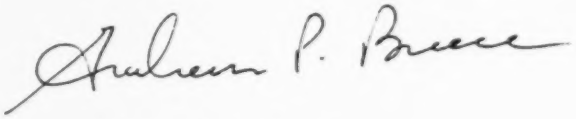
After the end of each fiscal year, the ministry will prepare a Service Plan Report that will describe actual accomplishments for the year just completed. The Report will include a comparison of planned and actual results, from both a financial and performance measure perspective and allow the public to assess the government's performance.

In the years ahead, Service Plans and Service Plan Reports, prepared by government ministries and organizations, will become the key tool by which government will manage public resources to ensure government programs are contributing, in a measurable way, to key government priorities in an efficient and effective manner.

The government's three-year Strategic Plan and Ministry three-year Service Plans will guide the reform of the province's public services so they meet British Columbians' needs. Measures to revitalize economic prosperity and protect and renew public services will lay the groundwork for a future of new opportunity for all British Columbians.

Accountability Statement

The 2002/03 - 2004/05 Ministry of Skills Development and Labour Service Plan was prepared under my direction in accordance with the *Budget Transparency and Accountability Act*. I am accountable for the basis on which the plan has been prepared. The plan was developed in the context of the government's *New Era* commitments which are to be addressed by May 17, 2005. All material fiscal assumptions and policy decisions as of January 28, 2002 have been considered in preparing the plan and I am accountable for achieving the specific objectives in the plan.



Honourable G. Bruce
Minister of Skills Development and Labour

February 5, 2002

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Strategic Context

Vision

A modern work environment for British Columbians that encourages innovation, rewards creative thinking and increases productivity. Workers and employers are treated fairly and equitably.

Mission

Our mission is to create an employment environment with dynamic workplaces that meet the needs of workers, employers and unions. Vulnerable workers will be protected. We will ensure that British Columbians have the tools they need to foster working relationships in safe and healthy workplaces. We will develop programs and legislation that contribute to provincial competitiveness and prosperity.

Values

The following values will be integral to achieving the goals of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour:

- We seek fair and balanced workplaces in all sectors.
- We support a competitive business environment that attracts investment to British Columbia and retains our skilled employees.
- We will protect the most vulnerable workers in the province. We will encourage small businesses to prosper through simple and streamlined processes.
- We strive to be relevant and responsive to constantly changing workplaces.
- We adhere to sound fiscal responsibility and management.
- We value the hard work and expertise of all Ministry employees.

Core Businesses

The following section describes the core businesses of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour.

1. Skills Development/Industry Adjustment

In June 2001, the Ministry was tasked with developing a provincial human resource strategy to address skill development and skill shortages as part of the province's economic development. In conjunction with the Ministry of Competition, Science and Enterprise, a human resource planning strategy will be developed during 2002-03. However, funding for new employment programs is not included in future budget plans.

The Ministry was also responsible for administering the Industry Adjustment Services (IAS) program, which provides assistance to businesses and communities to address sectoral and workplace issues affecting human resources. This service was provided to changing and expanding sectors and workplaces experiencing large-scale lay-offs. To meet the Ministry's budget plan and maintain other core programs, this program will be phased out by the end of the 2002-03 fiscal year.

The Ministry also had a lead role in addressing youth unemployment in B.C. A First Job Wage Rate was introduced in Fall 2001 to encourage the employment of new entrants into the labour market. Government's overall plans to revitalize the provincial economy will also create employment opportunities for B.C.'s youth. Any future work in this area by the Ministry will cease.

2. Industrial Relations

The Ministry's industrial relations activities aim to provide fairly administered industrial relations models. The Ministry oversees the *Labour Relations Code* (*LRC*), which sets a framework for: the rights of employees to choose trade union representation; collective bargaining between employers and trade unions in unionized workplaces; and, mechanisms to address changes in the employment structure of the workplace.

The *LRC* establishes the Labour Relations Board (LRB) as an independent tribunal to adjudicate disputes between employers, trade unions and employees. As a quasi-judicial tribunal, the LRB's ability to deal with industrial relations disputes is faster and more efficient than the courts. The LRB also provides mediation services to the parties at their request, which focuses on assisting parties in resolving collective bargaining disputes but also assists parties in developing improved labour relations and dispute reconciliation. The Employment Standards Branch (ESB) assists in the application of the *LRC* in supervising certification and decertification votes through the services of trained Industrial Relations Officers.

The Ministry actively monitors the industrial relations environment in B.C. Self-reliance in resolving disputes through free collective bargaining is encouraged, but occasionally the Ministry plays a direct role in helping parties to settle difficult disputes. This helps maintain industrial relations stability — particularly when the public may be adversely affected by a dispute. For example, the Minister may: appoint a mediator or special mediator to work with the parties; appoint a commission to report on the issues involved in a dispute; or, direct the LRB to designate essential services.

3. Employment Standards

Employment standards activities aim to foster fair, productive and harmonious workplaces that promote prosperous businesses, quality working lives and a strong, growing economy.

The ESB administers the *Employment Standards Act* (*ESA*), which sets minimum standards of wage payments, overtime, vacation, statutory holidays, leaves, compensation for length of service, hours of work, employment of children and licensing of certain employer groups. Branch staff answer employee and employer inquiries, receive and investigate complaints of contraventions, mediate and order appropriate enforcement action. The Branch also provides sector specific enforcement in areas identified by complainants as having exceptional difficulties with compliance.

The Employment Standards Tribunal (EST) adjudicates appeals of decisions of the ESB. The EST aims to provide timely, efficient and neutral resolution of ESB appeals. The Administrative Justice Review will provide guidance regarding appropriate structure for the EST. Required changes will take effect in 2002.

Legislative, regulatory and operational amendments are planned for 2002. A review of employment standards legislation, regulations and operations will result in changes to address government's vision of fair and effective standards.

4. Workers' Compensation

The Ministry oversees the *Workers' Compensation Act* (*WCA*), which sets out the workers' compensation system for B.C., provides a framework to protect workers by ensuring safe and healthy workplaces, and establishes the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) as an independent Crown agency to administer the Act. The Ministry's role is to ensure that the workers' compensation system is responsive to the needs of workers and employers alike.

The WCB's Panel of Administrators is responsible for the Board's performance measures and develops its performance standards. The 2001/02 review of WCB service delivery will provide direction regarding appropriate performance measures for the Board. The Ministry sets standards for the Workers' Compensation Review Board (WCRB), the Workers' Advisers Office and the Employers' Advisers Office.

As an independent Crown agency, the WCB provides compensation services including income replacement and vocational rehabilitation to workers suffering injury or disease. It creates and enforces provincial workplace health and safety regulations.

The Board is wholly funded by employer payroll assessments from the accident fund.

An appeal system is available to workers and employers involved in the workers' compensation system. The WCRB is an appeal tribunal independent of the WCB. It is administered by the Ministry, to ensure an independent appeal process, and hears appeals from workers and employers of decisions of Board officers. Changes to the existing appellate structure may be made pursuant to the reviews of the workers' compensation system and administrative justice tribunals.

The Workers' Advisers and Employers' Advisers offices are administered by the Ministry and provide support and advisory services to workers and employers involved in the workers' compensation system. The WCRB and the Advisers' offices are funded through the accident fund.

A review of WCB policies and operations took place in Fall 2001, with a report and recommendations made to the Minister in February 2002. Legislative amendments are planned for 2002 and regulatory change will follow.

Planning Context

There were approximately 2 million people employed in BC in 2000. Almost 355,000 worked in the broader public sector, more than 1.2 million worked in the private sector and approximately 365,000 were self-employed. In the same year, about 600,000 B.C. employees were members of trade unions. Small business in B.C. grew by 60 percent between 1990 and 2000. Currently, 47 percent of British Columbians work in small businesses with less than 50 employees. As unionization efforts increase, these businesses are increasingly using the LRB. This scan provides the context within which all of this work will take place in the future.

Strengths and Opportunities

- Government has a strong mandate to improve and revitalize B.C.'s labour environment with aims to enhance the provincial economy.
- The changing world of work and expanded economy has led to diversification and growth of non-traditional areas such as entertainment, technology and eco-tourism, creating expanded employment opportunities.
- B.C.'s educated workforce is attractive to potential employers.
- Reviews of the workers' compensation system and *Employment Standards Act* will ensure that legislation and programs reflect the realities of today's workplaces.
- Government is committed to a less onerous regulatory environment.

Challenges

- Provincial, national and global economic climates may create instability in many workplaces in the province. The Ministry strives to establish a stable employment environment to counter external forces as much as possible.
- The changing nature of work in B.C. has resulted in job losses and closures in many traditional resource-based sectors.
- Decreases in government spending will reduce the Ministry's capacity to provide services. The core services of the Ministry will be identified and strengthened.

Risks

- Reduction of resources, including human resources, within the Ministry will make it difficult to conduct business and provide programs at previous levels. Reviewing core services will ensure that the essential services of the Ministry are maintained.

Assumptions

- Government has a role to provide minimum workplace standards and procedures to protect the public interest, promote industrial stability and encourage economic growth. Outside of this, employers and their employees, or their representatives, are in the best position to determine how their workplaces should operate.
- Stakeholder groups will continue to have differing interests, but will share an interest in an economy that works.

Ministry Goals

1. **Promote productive and competitive workplaces from which good relationships in the labour relations community can be developed.**

The labour relations climate in BC has been perceived as a hindrance to investment in the past. Thus, the Ministry will shift to a labour relations framework that:

- helps promote a vibrant, productive and competitive economy,
- balances the rights of employers, trade unions and employees, and
- protects the rights of third parties not involved in industrial disputes.

The Ministry will move from a system that provides broad-based, all-inclusive industrial relations services to one that delivers streamlined, focused activities in a more efficient manner. The Ministry is also exploring "user-pay" options for mediation services of the LRB as a cost-recovery measure.

2. **Fair and balanced employment standards that allow mutually beneficial relationships between workers and employers.**

Changes are also expected in the employment standards area. Legislative changes to the *Employment Standards Act* are expected in the Spring 2002 legislative session.

These changes will allow a shift from blanket coverage, prescribed practices and government enforcement to a system of focused coverage and enforcement; greater flexibility to promote practices that work for employers and employees; and employer associations that encourage good practices and exert pressure on non-compliant members. This focused approach to employment standards will reduce workload at the ESB and successfully meet the deregulation aims of government.

3. **Safe and healthy workplaces and a workers' compensation system that is responsive to the needs of workers and employers alike.**

Over the next three years the Ministry will make changes to the workers' compensation system. Legislative changes to the *Workers' Compensation Act* will be made in the Spring 2002 legislative session to ensure that the Act is appropriate for today's work environment. Core reviews and overarching government strategies aimed at deregulation and "red tape" elimination will increase the responsiveness of the WCB for workers and employers. The workers' compensation appeal system will be streamlined.

Performance Measurement

Labour market indicators are influenced by a variety of factors, which creates difficulty in determining attribution when the indicators change, positively or negatively. Thus, the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour is limited in the indicators for which it can claim accountability for. The following broad labour indicators provide an illustration of the employment situation in BC and provide the framework within which the work of the Ministry is undertaken.

	October 2000	October 2001
BC Labour Force (000)	2,113.9	2,084.2
Employment Rate	60.6%	58.4%
Unemployment Rate	6.9%	7.7%
Participation Rate	65.1%	63.3%
Youth Unemployment Rate (15-24 year olds)	14.4%	13.7%

The following pages provide an overview of key Ministry goals for each core business area, the strategies that will be used to meet these goals and the measures that will be used to determine progress. The measures included will be reviewed and refined over time to ensure that they are representative of the Ministry's work and provide an accurate picture of its achievements.

Core Business Area: Industrial Relations	
Goal: Promote productive and competitive workplaces from which good relationships in the labour relations community can be developed.	
Objective:	**Encourage mutual confidence between unions and employers.**
Strategies:	Provide information to LRB clients about LRC and industrial relations practices.
	Create an industrial relations environment that is responsive to the needs of workers, unions and employers.
Objective:	**Decrease lost workdays due to labour disputes.**
Strategies:	Encourage alternative dispute resolution processes.
	Encourage the use of resources in the community to develop quick resolution of disputes.
Objective:	**Decrease number of *LRC* contraventions.**
Strategies:	Provide information to LRB clients about LRC and industrial relations practices.
	Ensure LRB operations are suited to today's work environment.
	Create industrial relations environment that is responsive to needs of workers, unions and employers.
Objective:	**Resolve appeals in a timely manner.**
Strategies:	Facilitate use of early intervention and alternative dispute resolution processes.
	Expedite LRB adjudication, including more focused decisions.

Industrial Relations Performance Measures	**Targets[1]**			
	2001 Base Data[2]	**2002 Target**	**2003 Target**	**2004 Target**
Output Measures				
Number of applications and complaints received.	3,032	3,430	3,430	3,430
Outcome Measures				
Number of applications and complaints disposed of.	3,152	3,550	3,550	3,550
Percentage of disputes settled.[3]	72.4%	72.5%	72.5%	72.5%
Average number of backlog cases.[4]	38.4	38.5	38.5	38.5

[1] Estimates and targets are based on the averages from 1998 to 2001 inclusive.
[2] Figures for 2001 are preliminary and subject to change prior to publication of the LRB's 2001 Annual Report.
[3] "Disputes" that come to the LRB include, unfair labour practice complaints (Ss. 5-12), applications under section 32 and 45, Part 5 applications (Ss. 57-70) and applications under sections 55 and 74 of the *LRC*.
[4] In general, a case is seen as part of the "backlog" if it has been assigned for more than 90 days and no hearing has been held, or where a hearing has been completed and more than 45 days have passed.

Core Business Area: Employment Standards	
Goal: Fair and balanced employment standards that allow mutually beneficial relationships between workers and employers.	
Objective:	**Facilitate increased compliance with *ESA*.**
Strategies:	Increase employers' and employees' knowledge and understanding of *ESA*.
	Ensure contraventions of *ESA* are identified and corrected.
Objective:	**Create a fairer and more balanced employment standards system that benefits employers and employees.**
Strategies:	Ensure *ESA* is suited to today's workplaces and meets the needs of employers and employees.
	Increase employers' and employees' awareness of the employment standards system, including where they can go for assistance.
Objective:	**Resolve employment standards disputes prior to formal complaint being filed with ESB.**
Strategies:	Provide advice and support services for employers and employees.
	Support early intervention and alternative dispute resolution in employment standards disputes.
Objective:	**Decrease number of EST appeals.**
Strategies:	Support early intervention in employment standards disputes.
	Improve quality of ESB decision-making.
	Streamline appeal system.

Employment Standards Performance Measures	**Targets**			
	2001/02 Base Data	**2002/03 Target**	**2003/04 Target**	**2004/05 Target**
Output Measures				
Complaints received by ESB.	14,000	- 0-5%[4]	- 10-20%	- 10-20%
ESA determinations.	1,600	- 10-20%	- 10-20%	- 10-20%
EST appeals processed.	809	- 0-5%[4]	- 10-20%	- 10-20%
ESB early intervention attempts.	1,435	1,500	1,500	1,500
Outcome Measures				
Determinations upheld by the appeal body.[5]	68%	68%	70%	70%
ESB/EST timeliness[6]				

[4] As legislation will not be enacted until Fall 2002, a higher than average number of complaints is expected prior to the legislation coming into effect. The Ministry anticipates increased inquiries and complaints as the transition from old legislation to new legislation proceeds. This will be due to heightened information regarding the existing system and the move to the amended system. A drop-off is anticipated as the Branch mandate is refined and implemented.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Based on 517 decisions that made findings with respect to substantive matters under appeal. Remaining decisions were varied (10%), cancelled (8%) or referred back to ESB (10%).

[8] The Ministry recognizes timeliness of the ESB and EST as important performance measures. Appropriate indicators, with baseline and target figures, will be included in future Service Plans once new employment standards legislation has been introduced and decisions regarding the structure and administration of the ESB and EST have been made.

Core Business Area: Workers' Compensation	
Goal: Safe and healthy workplaces and a workers' compensation system that is responsive to the needs of workers and employers alike.	
Objective:	**Fewer workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths.**
Strategies:	Support employers in managing the risks and consequences of workplace illnesses and injuries; encourage workplaces to improve their safety practices.
	Provide information, education and training programs.
	Target employers and industries with poor safety records.
Objective:	**Better compliance with *WCA* and OHS regulations**
Strategies:	Support employers in managing the risks and consequences of workplace illnesses and injuries; encourage workplaces to improve their safety practices.
	Ensure workers' compensation system is responsive and meets the needs of employers and employees.
	Ensure *WCA* and OHS regulations are suited to today's workplaces.
Objective:	**Decrease number of appeals filed.**
Strategies:	Facilitate employers' and employees' understanding of the workers' compensation system, including appeal processes.
	Streamline appeal system.

Workers' compensation performance measures are included on the following page.

Workers' Compensation Performance Measures[9] [10]	Targets			
	2001/02 Base Data	2002/03 Target	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target
Output Measures				
Claims reject/disallow rate[11]	7.26%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Inquiries responded to by Workers' Advisers Office.	115,108	137,500	137,000	125,500
Advice/assistance provided by Employers' Advisers Office.	13,150	8,000 [12]	14,000	14,500
Employers' Advisers Office information and skills development seminar participation.	3,150	15,000	3,650	3,700
Appeals processed by WCRB.	(2001) S - 5,532 M - 7,178	(2002) S - 5,900 M - 7,200	(2003) S - 6,500 M - 9,200	(2004) S - 7,200 M - 10,000
Outcome Measures				
Injury rate[13]	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.5
Injury rate for "focus-firms"[14]	6.6	6.3	6.0	5.7
Average claim duration[15]	50.8 days	50.8 days	49.8 days	48.8 days
Average time to resolve WCRB appeals.[20]	(2001) O - 17 mos. W - 11 mos.	(2002) O - 17 mos. W - 11 mos.	(2003) O - 17 mos. W - 11 mos.	(2004) O - 17 mos. W - 11 mos.
Number of WCRB appeals that support WCB findings.[21]	(2001) 4,300	(2002) 4,320	(2003) 5,520	(2004) 6,000

[9] As an independent Crown agency, the WCB identifies and measures its own major objectives. The Board produces an annual report, which provides more detailed information on strategies and services. Information regarding the Board's performance is provided for readers' easy reference, in the shaded areas.

[10] Projected figures pertaining to the WCRB are based on trend information. Figures are based on the assumption that the Review Board will continue to exist in its present form, and will hold the same statutory mandate as it has in the past.

[11] Claims first reported where the WCB decides the claimant is not a worker or the injury is not work-related.

[12] Estimates and targets are based on impact of expected new legislation and reduction of appeal backlog.

[13] Includes advice and assistance provided to new clients that fully addressed their needs at point of contact.

[14] If EAO maintains role of conducting Information Awareness Seminars on workers' compensation legislation and regulations, all available resources will be concentrated on developing and conducting these seminars for employers and workers outlining changes, when introduced. During this period, other EAO functions will be significantly curtailed.

[15] Includes employers, workers, safety committee members and professionals who attend EAO seminars on various components of workers' compensation legislation. As noted above, this number is likely to increase in 2002/03 after new legislation is introduced.

[16] Summary decisions (S) are administrative matters that are the responsibility of the registrar. They included applications for extension of time, decisions on jurisdictional issues, suspensions, withdrawals, abandonment appeals and reactivation requests. Merit findings (M) dispose of the appeal and are made by a panel, in writing, with written reasons pursuant to section 90(3) of the *WCA*.

[17] Time loss injuries per 100 person years of employment.

[18] Time loss injuries per 100 person years of employment in firms where the WCB Prevention Division has focused attention.

[19] Estimated number of days benefits paid over the life of an average time loss claim.

[20] The WCRB decides appeals in two ways, by oral hearings (O) and by written submission (W) from the parties.

[21] The percentage range of WCRB appeals allowed each year has fluctuated between the low 30s and high 40s. On average, over the long term, the WCRB allows 40% of the appeals it hears.

Workers' Compensation Performance Measures[1] [2]	Targets			
	2001/02 Base Data	2002/03 Target	2003/04 Target	2004/05 Target
Output Measures				
Claims reject/disallow rate[3]	7.26%	7.25%	7.25%	7.25%
Inquiries responded to by Workers' Advisers Office	35,208	37,500	37,000	125,500
Advice/assistance provided to Employers' Advisers Office	13,150	8,000	14,000	15,500
Employers' Advisers Office information and skills development seminar participation	3,150	15,000	3,650	4,700
Appeals processed by WCRB	(2001) S – 5,542 M – 7,178	(2002) S – 5,900 M – 7,200	(2003) S – 6,500 M – 9,200	(2004) S – 7,200 M – 10,000
Outcome Measures				
Injury rate[4]	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.5
Injury rate for "focus-firms"[5]	6.6	6.3	6.0	5.7
Average claim duration[6]	50.8 days	50.8 days	49.8 days	48.8 days
Average time to resolve WCRB appeals	(2001) O – 17 mos. W – 11 mos.	(2002) O – 17 mos. W – 11 mos.	(2003) O – 17 mos. W – 11 mos.	(2004) O – 17 mos. W – 11 mos.
Number of WCRB appeals that support WCB findings.[7]	(2001) 4,300	(2002) 4,320	(2003) 5,520	(2004) 6,000

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[1] As an independent "town agency" the WCB identifies and measures its own major objectives. The Board produces an annual report, which provides more detailed information on strategies and services. Information regarding the Board's performance is provided for readers' easy reference, in the shaded areas.

[2] Projected figures pertaining to the WCRB are based on trend information. Figures are based on the assumption that the Review Board will continue to exist in its present form, and will hold the same statutory mandate as it has in the past.

[3] Claims first reported where the WCB decides the claimant is not a worker or the injury is not work-related.

[4] Estimates and targets are based on impact of expected new legislation and reduction of appeal backlog.

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[6] If EAO maintains role of conducting Information Awareness Seminars on workers' compensation legislation and regulations, all available resources will be concentrated on developing and conducting these seminars for employers and workers outlining changes when introduced. During this period, other EAO functions will be significantly curtailed.

[7] Includes employers', workers', safety committee members and professionals who attend EAO seminars on various components of workers' compensation legislation. As noted above, this number is likely to increase in 2002/03 after new legislation is introduced.

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[12] The WCRB decides appeals in two ways: by oral hearings (O) and by written submission (W) from the parties.

[13] The percentage range of WCRB appeals allowed each year has fluctuated between the low 30s and high 40s. On average, over the long term, the WCRB allows 40% of the appeals it hears.

Consistency with Government Priorities

The objectives of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour are consistent with the priorities of government. The labour environment in B.C. provides a backdrop for achieving some of the broad goals of government such as optimizing economic competitiveness and performance.

Employment standards are considered by businesses, including those in the high-tech industry, when deciding where to locate. Flexible and appropriate employment standards will attract businesses to B.C. and contribute to the provincial economy. Workers' compensation rates and coverage also influence the attractiveness of B.C. as a place to do business. Attracting private sector businesses to the province will increase the number of high-paying job opportunities for British Columbians and contribute to economic prosperity.

The Ministry's efforts to optimize efficiency through streamlining of services, such as the workers' compensation appeal system and the LRB, are consistent with the government's priority of responsible and accountable management of B.C.'s public resources and tax dollars.

The Ministry has already achieved the following *New Era* commitments:

- Restore education as an essential service under the *Labour Relations Code*
- Restore secret ballot votes on union certification
- Remove mandatory sectoral bargaining in the construction sector
- Restore open tendering on government contracts
- Eliminate union-only "hiring hall" requirements on highway construction and silviculture contracts
- Repeal the *Skills Development and Fair Wage Act*
- Repeal the ability of some pension plans to suspend pension benefits for early retirees who return to work in their previous field of employment

Work towards remaining *New Era* commitments related to the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour is ongoing and is included in this Service Plan. Such commitments include, making the workers' compensation system more responsive to workers and employers, making employment standards more flexible and reducing the regulatory burden.

Deregulation

Cross-government deregulation initiatives, which seek to reduce the overall regulatory burden by one third, will impact all core businesses of the Ministry of Skills Development and Labour.

Specifically, legislative reviews of the *Workers' Compensation Act* and the *Employment Standards Act* are ongoing and changes to the legislation are expected in Spring 2002. These amendments will require regulatory change, which will be made in light of the goals of creating a less onerous regulatory environment and simplifying processes.

Until the current reviews are complete it is difficult to determine specific targets for regulatory reduction. As well, when new legislation is first enacted, there may be overlap between old and new systems, which will result in a temporary increase in regulatory requirements. Once the transitions are complete the Ministry will set specific targets for reducing the regulatory burden and will report on its achievements annually.

Summary Expenditure Plan

Core Business	2001/02 Restated Estimates	2002/03 Estimates	2003/04 Plan	2004/05 Plan
Operating Expenditures ($000)				
Skills Development	4,015	3,757	-	-
Industrial Relations	9,329	9,510	8,870	6,488
Employment Standards	11,489	10,487	11,744	8,324
Workers' Compensation	1	1	1	1
Internal Administration	5,062	4,973	5,650	4,614
Totals	29,896	28,728	26,265	19,427
FTEs				
Direct	298	238	214	185
Workers' Compensation Review Board and Compensation Advisory Services (under review)	238	238	238	238
Total	536	476	452	423
Consolidated Revenue Fund Capital ($000)				
Skills Development	35	-	-	-
Industrial Relations	575	178	418	176
Employment Standards	777	297	195	165
Workers' Compensation	3,960	863	1,457	1,055
Internal Administration	684	192	306	191
Totals	6,031	1,530	2,376	1,587

Information Management Directions

1. Service delivery via the Web
2. Shared servers for SDL applications
3. Re-use of designs and functions across SDL development projects
4. Data standardization
5. Enterprise data
6. Records management and e-documents
7. Electronic information access and protection of privacy
8. Data sharing

Major Projects

Description	Target	Output/Outcome
Employment Standards Branch – Case Management System	May 2002	• More effective monitoring and enforcement activities through enhancing support for officers and increased direct contact with employers • Enhanced management reporting and tracking of performance metrics • Improved systems support for the consistent application of ESB regulation
Systems Analysis and Requirements Definition for WAO, EAO, LRB & PSB	March 2002	• Better integration and reduced data entry effort • Enhanced capability